

Governor's Council on Climate Change (GC3) Equity and Environmental Justice Workgroup- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MEETING MINUTES

Date: July 10, 2020

Meeting time: 3 to 4PM

Location: meet.google.com/rgn-xsjs-zmx

ATTENDANCE

Working Group Member	Title	Organization	Present
Alex Rodriguez	Community Organizer	CT League of Conservation Voters	X
Denise Savageau	Executive Director	CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation	X
Saranda Alka	Intern	CT Brownfields Initiative	X
Dani Zanuttini-Frank	Intern	New Haven City Plan	X
Lynne Bonnett		Greater New Haven Green Fund	X
Brian Basso	Intern	Governor's Council on Climate Change	X
Rebecca French	Director	DEEP Office of Climate Planning	X
Aaron Goode		New England Grassroots Environmental Fund	X
Kathy Fay	Director of Community Sustainability	Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven	X

Associated Staff	Title	Organization	Present
Edith Pestana	EJ Program: Director	DEEP	X
Max Teirstein	EJ Program: Intern	DEEP	X

AGENDA & NOTES

Welcome and Announcements

Agenda Item(s)

Facilitated by Alex Rodriguez, League of Conservation Voters

- Goal is to end the call with finalized public participation guidance
 - Just because we've voted to decide to send the document over to the EJ working group for review, doesn't mean that it's not a continually changing document. There will be more opportunity to weigh in on the document.

Meeting Structure:

1. Reviewing and Editing Draft Public Participation Documents
 - Reading through document together (linked here: https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/climatechange/GC3/GC3-2020-agendas-and-minutes/Draft-public-participation-documents/GC3_Public_Participation_Guidance.pdf)
2. Identifying Gaps in Public Participation
3. Envision what in-person gatherings will look like with COVID-19 safety precautions in mind
4. Open Floor
5. Closing

Public comments: Transparent and Accountable Decision-making

Lynne Bonnett, Greater New Haven Green Fund

- Wants to know if the document will be sent to leaders of the GC3's working groups
 - Mr. Rodriguez confirms that, yes, it will be shared with them.

Denise Savageau, CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation

- Once this document is finalized it'll go to the sub-working groups. The document describes how everyone will have a unique course of action. Ms. Savageau is concerned that anyone who is trying to follow the subcommittees of the GC3 will be overwhelmed. Collectively, we should try to come up with a single plan of outreach across working groups, rather than having each of the subgroups implement public participation plans individually. It's too much to expect each subgroup to come up with their own plan and still be successful in our outreach to communities.

Edith Pestana, DEEP

- Ms. Pestana adds that we can use this document as a model, but we can make changes to it as we move forward.

Alex Rodriguez, CT LCV

- Mr. Rodriguez wants to see other subgroups post Facebook events, employ broader advertising efforts to encourage participation.

Dani Zanuttini-Frank, New Haven City Lab

- He suggested we emphasize co-learning – stakeholders learn from issue-experts about technical information relating to the programs, gov't officials learn about assets and needs of community – as a mechanism for informed participation.

Public comments: Accessible and Inclusive Decision-making**Rebecca French, DEEP**

- Ms. French said, "Public meetings is a difficult question right now. There could potentially be a budget issue there. I suggest you would keep the language flexible for now, but other questions must be decided later. Do we turn away people without a mask? Is the decision there the same between indoor and outdoor events?"
- Ms. French allowed that the document could reference the governor's direction regarding Reopen CT. However, we have guidance's as state agencies outside of Reopen CT. If we're running a GC3 event and DEEP is administering it, DEEP is subject to whatever statewide guidance we have about in-person meetings. It's an agency-wide issue about meetings, public hearings. That goes for municipalities too. This is guidance from the EEJ public participation work group, so you can say what you want to say, but Ms. French would want you to know that if there is a conflict between a recommendation from the workgroup and what we can do with the agency, we cannot run afoul of our agency's guidance. Reopen CT is not the only guidance the state is dealing with.

Edith Pestana, DEEP

- COVID is going to affect all work groups. Ms. Pestana would advise caution when including anything right now regarding COVID, given that this process will extend through 2021. Hopefully by then we'll be able to encourage face-to-face input. This process depends on interpersonal engagement.

Lynne Bonnett, Greater New Haven Green Fund

- Ms. Bonnett wrote that places such as United Way and Make Haven have given out 5000 masks and many of the sewers are still producing masks. We can ask for donated masks to help facilitate PPE for live meetings if people need them

Denise Savageau, CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation

- We're probably not going to have in-person meetings right away, but down the pike, some of these guidances are difficult to implement in a COVID context (e.g., feeding folks if meetings happen during dinnertimes, some people may not be able to afford the right equipment if we require face coverings & ppe). If things will be remote or have a remote option, we need to find a way to reach folks without computer access or stable internet.
 - Ms. Savageau's recommendation for revising the document to promote access: Under Item 2 - section Page 5 top of page - need to further expand alternate ways to participate given Covid since this isn't just alternative but our reality in terms of engaging the public. On page 4 item on providing food - need to possibly decide if OK based on Covid and providing PPE if we do have any in person meetings. So maybe a general statement on Covid.

Public comments: Respect, Efficiency, and Non-Exploitation**Denise Savageau, CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation**

- Item 3: do we have access to a sign language interpreter?
- Item 4, page 6: Designate central point of contact. This is important and what I was referring to earlier. Each subworkgroup should not do outreach separately. Need the equity group to take the lead on this.

General Public Comments**Rebecca French, DEEP**

- Concerns about capacity at each work group level for undertaking this level of engagement beyond posting meetings, making recordings available. Workgroups have been keeping up

with that, and even that has been a challenge for some of that. How might DEEP facilitate a collective public participation process?

- Today you are getting through the guidance documents that will inform this process but I would really like to work with this committee on—July 15th, Commissioner Dykes will present where we are in the GC3 process to the public. I would like to use that time for potentially a town hall, nothing too complicated. Our main plan will be online events, but I want to brainstorm about how we might have town halls, who we would invite, so that each working group can present their recommendations to the public. That's the beginning of a longer process that continues through 2021. It would be an opportunity for people to be involved on the front end of a process extending through next year.

Edith Pestana, DEEP

- We had a kickoff meeting in New Haven. People from Hartford, Stamford, and Bridgeport came to hear what we were doing at the GC3 and meet each other, share interests, and build relationships. That's something we always emphasize. Finding ways to create relationships to get this work done. We had plans to go to New London next to talk about things that were more relevant to New London, to bring them into the fold if they had the wherewithal and means. We can still continue to build on the relationships we began and invite people to participate in these groups, if they can. But we don't have the representation of stakeholders in the state. We need to discuss a plan of outreach that requires us to actually do phone calls and invite people via phone—I think that's the next step. To increase that membership and get additional stakeholders. We need to create the relationships now to have people participate with us now that we're moving forward with this. Later on, some of those people can call people they know and bring them in to participate too.
- It's come to my attention, too, that this process is intergenerational. Some of us read emails, some of us just text. Some need phone calls as reminders. Depending on your age, you're used to using a different social media. I think it would be great if you all could recommend the best venue for sharing information. I know Brian is looking at that, too.

Lynne Bonnett, Greater New Haven Green Fund

- Ms. Bonnett: Yes Edith, I think the municipal solid waste to energy stakeholders and sewage sludge incineration stakeholders are woefully underrepresented. If we know issues in the working groups now is the time to engage people that have historically worked on these issues and have a vested interest in the outcome.

Denise Savageau, CT Council on Soil and Water Conservation

- We should consider what kind of feedback we want, design a plan to solicit that information fairly quickly through a workshop, and then come to the review period with some information already. Actually have something ahead of time, rather than just have community members react to things that had been decided ahead of time. I think we could do it fairly quickly. The one thing that's missing is the questions we want to ask, that depends on what information we think will be the most useful. We could do that within the next 3 or 4 weeks.
- Right now Zoom is talked about as an alternate path of communication, but it is not an alternate, it is the primary method. How do we make sure virtual meetings are conducted equitably? That's where I think we need to expand a bit more. Most of the work is on in-person meetings. Are there things we need to add that have to do with having virtual meetings? The success of virtual meetings is that they'll stick around post-COVID, so language in the document about virtual meetings will undoubtedly be useful. Is it good enough for the community we want to address if all the info about the virtual meeting has been disseminated virtually? My guess is no. Then how do we want to do it instead? ‘
- Do we need printed posters about virtual meetings?

- There is an urgency of getting this document finalized. Maybe if we get it out there, edit it, then we can have a meeting. I would suggest a meeting within the next week to 10 days.

Kathy Fay, Neighborhood Housing Services of New Haven

- When I was at the original EJ meetings, there was the instruction to figure out what subcommittee you wanted to work on, but I wasn't placed in the subcommittee I wanted to be in. Even someone as engaged as I am has a hard time navigating the GC3 bureaucracy. It is important that we start to compile a list of names, contact information, and construct some basic messages about what is going on, and let them know that there will be an opportunity to participate soon. We have to do that work now, and we have to make sure that that dovetails with the speed of the other process. We want to prevent that from becoming reactive, where people feel like everything is being decided without them. We do not want 6 people, we want 600 people.
- Buildings subcommittee is having a weekly meeting, and it's still hard for them to keep up with deadlines. If this committee is actually going to be creating deliverables and not just stating the principles behind what happens, we may run out of time and the process may get way ahead of us.
- The buildings subcommittee located their document on a google drive and then sent it out to community members, so they could work in between meetings and add their notes. That may be unwieldy, but it's another way of working in between meetings.

Next Steps:

- Finalizing this document with the points Ms. Savageau has mentioned is important and I want everybody's input on how we should move on that. **July 24th**.
- We need to hone in on the intergenerational dynamic of public participation.